



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2017-1245; Product Identifier 2017-NM-099-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Airbus Model A318 series airplanes and Model A319 series airplanes; all Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and all Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. This proposed AD was prompted by an evaluation by the design approval holder (DAH) indicating that the holes of the upper cleat to upper stringer attachments at certain areas of the left- and right-hand wings are subject to widespread fatigue damage (WFD). This proposed AD would require modifying the holes of the upper cleat to upper stringer attachments at certain areas of the left- and right-hand wings. We are proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- Fax: 202-493-2251.

- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this NPRM, contact Airbus, Airworthiness Office – EIAS, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone: +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax: +33 5 61 93 44 51; email: account.airworth-eas@airbus.com; Internet: <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Standards Branch, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2017-1245; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations office (telephone: 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer,
International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW.,
Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone: 425-227-1405; fax: 425-227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposed AD. Send your comments to an address listed under the ADDRESSES section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2017-1245; Product Identifier 2017-NM-099-AD” at the beginning of your comments. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this NPRM. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this NPRM based on those comments.

We will post all comments we receive, without change, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. We will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact we receive about this NPRM.

Discussion

Fatigue damage can occur locally, in small areas or structural design details, or globally, in widespread areas. Multiple-site damage is widespread damage that occurs in a large structural element such as a single rivet line of a lap splice joining two large skin panels. Widespread damage can also occur in multiple elements such as adjacent frames or stringers. Multiple-site damage and multiple-element damage cracks are typically too

small initially to be reliably detected with normal inspection methods. Without intervention, these cracks will grow, and eventually compromise the structural integrity of the airplane. This condition is known as widespread fatigue damage. It is associated with general degradation of large areas of structure with similar structural details and stress levels. As an airplane ages, WFD will likely occur, and will certainly occur if the airplane is operated long enough without any intervention.

The FAA's WFD final rule (75 FR 69746, November 15, 2010) became effective on January 14, 2011. The WFD rule requires certain actions to prevent structural failure due to WFD throughout the operational life of certain existing transport category airplanes and all of these airplanes that will be certificated in the future. For existing and future airplanes subject to the WFD rule, the rule requires that DAHs establish a limit of validity (LOV) of the engineering data that support the structural maintenance program. Operators affected by the WFD rule may not fly an airplane beyond its LOV, unless an extended LOV is approved.

The WFD rule (75 FR 69746, November 15, 2010) does not require identifying and developing maintenance actions if the DAHs can show that such actions are not necessary to prevent WFD before the airplane reaches the LOV. Many LOVs, however, do depend on accomplishment of future maintenance actions. As stated in the WFD rule, any maintenance actions necessary to reach the LOV will be mandated by airworthiness directives through separate rulemaking actions.

In the context of WFD, this action is necessary to enable DAHs to propose LOVs that allow operators the longest operational lives for their airplanes, and still ensure that

WFD will not occur. This approach allows for an implementation strategy that provides flexibility to DAHs in determining the timing of service information development (with FAA approval), while providing operators with certainty regarding the LOV applicable to their airplanes.

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2017-0117, dated July 7, 2017 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus Model A318 series airplanes; Model A319 series airplanes; Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. The MCAI states:

Within the scope of work of service life extension for A320 aeroplanes and of widespread fatigue damage evaluations, it has been determined that a structural modification is required to allow the aeroplanes to continue operation up to the limit of validity (LoV).

This condition, if not corrected, may affect the structural integrity of the wing.

To address this potential unsafe condition, Airbus issued SB A320-57-1208, providing instructions to oversize the holes of the upper cleat to upper stringer attachments at Rib 2 to Rib 7 (inclusive).

For the reason described above, this [EASA] AD requires modification of the affected holes.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2017-1245.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR part 51

Airbus has issued Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1208, dated November 21, 2016. The service information describes procedures for modifying the stringer attachments at rib 2 through rib 7 of the left- and right-hand wings. The modification includes oversizing the holes, doing an eddy current inspection of the affected holes for damage, and repair. This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

FAA's Determination and Requirements of this Proposed AD

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, we have been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI and service information referenced above. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all pertinent information and determined an unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other products of these same type designs.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 1,136 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We estimate the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

Estimated costs

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Modification (by oversizing and doing eddy current inspection)	125 work-hours X \$85 per hour = \$10,625	\$26,260	\$36,885	\$41,901,360

We have received no definitive data that would enable us to provide cost estimates for the on-condition actions specified in this proposed AD.

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. "Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs," describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in "Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements." Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

This proposed AD is issued in accordance with authority delegated by the Executive Director, Aircraft Certification Service, as authorized by FAA Order 8000.51C. In accordance with that order, issuance of ADs is normally a function of the Compliance and Airworthiness Division, but during this transition period, the Executive Director has delegated the authority to issue ADs applicable to transport category airplanes to the Director of the System Oversight Division.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

1. Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a “significant rule” under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska; and
4. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive (AD):

Airbus: Docket No. FAA-2017-1245; Product Identifier 2017-NM-099-AD.

(a) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Model A318-111, -112, -121, and -122 airplanes; Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes; certificated in any category; all manufacturer serial numbers, except airplanes specified in paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this AD.

(1) Model A318 series airplanes on which Airbus Modification (Mod) 39195 has been embodied in production or Airbus Service Bulletin A320-00-1219 has been embodied in service.

(2) Model A319 series airplanes on which Airbus Mod 28238, Mod 28162, and Mod 28342 have been embodied in production.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 57, wings.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by an evaluation by the design approval holder indicating that the holes of the upper cleat to upper stringer attachments at rib 2 through rib 7 of the left- and right-hand wings are subject to widespread fatigue damage. We are issuing this AD to prevent fatigue cracking in the stringer attachment holes of the wings, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the wings.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Modification

Before reaching the upper limit, but not before reaching the lower limit, as defined in table 1 to paragraph (g) of this AD, as applicable: Modify the holes of the upper cleat to upper stringer attachments at rib 2 through rib 7 inclusive, on the left- and right-hand wings by oversizing the holes, doing eddy current inspections of the holes for damage, and repairing any damage found, in accordance with the Accomplishment

Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1208, dated November 21, 2016, except as required by paragraph (h) of this AD. Repair all damage before further flight.

Table 1 to paragraph (g) of this AD – Window of Embodiment (Total Accumulated Flight Hours (TFH) or Total Accumulated Flight Cycles (TFC), whichever occurs first since airplane first flight)

Airplanes affected		Lower Limit		Upper Limit	
		TFH	TFC	TFH	TFC
A318-100	All	94,000	47,000	159,200	79,600
A319-100 and A320-200	Pre-mod 160001 and Pre-Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1193	94,000	47,000	159,200	79,600
A319-100 and A320-200	Post-mod 160001 or Post-Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1193	52,260	26,130	101,610	50,805
A321-100 and A321-200	Pre-mod 160021	101,200	50,600	148,300	74,100
A321-200	Post-mod 160021	44,796	22,398	112,808	56,404

(h) Service Information Exception

Where Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1208, dated November 21, 2016, specifies to contact Airbus for appropriate action, and specifies that action as “RC” (Required for Compliance): Before further flight, accomplish corrective actions in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (i)(2) of this AD.

(i) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this

AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Section, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j)(2) of this AD. Information may be emailed to 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov. Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(2) Contacting the Manufacturer: As of the effective date of this AD, for any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA); or Airbus's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) Required for Compliance (RC): Except as required by paragraph (h) of this AD: If any service information contains procedures or tests that are identified as RC, those procedures and tests must be done to comply with this AD; any procedures or tests that are not identified as RC are recommended. Those procedures and tests that are not identified as RC may be deviated from using accepted methods in accordance with the operator's maintenance or inspection program without obtaining approval of an AMOC, provided the procedures and tests identified as RC can be done and the airplane can be

put back in an airworthy condition. Any substitutions or changes to procedures or tests identified as RC require approval of an AMOC.

(j) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA AD 2017-0117, dated July 7, 2017, for related information. This MCAI may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2017-1245.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone: 425-227-1405; fax: 425-227-1149.

(3) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus, Airworthiness Office – EIAS, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone: +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax: +33 5 61 93 44 51; email: account.airworth-eas@airbus.com; Internet: <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Standards Branch, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on December 26, 2017.

John P. Piccola, Jr.,
Acting Director,
System Oversight Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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